

# Historical Fiction Genre Study

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Teaching Young Adult Literature in the Secondary School

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# Historical Fiction

## Genre Study

### Grade Level

9<sup>th</sup> grade

### Genre

History is the study of change over time. Historical fiction brings history to life by placing appealing characters in accurately described historical settings. Historical fiction is realistic fiction set in a time remote enough from the present to be considered history. Although the story is imaginary, it is within the realm of possibility that such events could have occurred. In these stories, historical facts blend with imaginary characters and plot (Lynch-Brown, 1999). The historical fiction genre uses imaginative and figurative language to entice students into historical explorations. Students are exposed to a study of history on an emotional and cognitive level through the interaction of character, drama, and facts of the past. According to Nilsen and Donelson (2001), “As with any literary form, there are standards for judging historical novels. They should be historically accurate and steeped in the sense of time and place. We should recognize totems and taboos, food, clothing, vocations, leisure activities, customs, smells, religions, literature, and all that goes into making one time and one place unique from another.” Historical novels allow us the courage needed to face conflict as they identify with characters dealing with conflict in a historical period.

### Overview

This unit will review the content of the historical fiction genre, allow the students to see stereotypes and biases in historical events, present the guidelines for evaluating the genre, and experience quality literary encounters through three young adult novels. These novels represent various experiences within this genre that reflect the theme of war. More specifically, each novel reflects an experience or event relating to the Pre-Civil War, the American Revolution, and Post World War II.

### Purpose

The purpose of this unit is to introduce students to the historical fiction genre through introductory lessons, quality literature examples, and activities that provide experiences using the evocative, connective, and reflective dimensions of reading.

**Disclaimer:** *The links presented within the activities have been scrutinized for their grade and age appropriateness; however, contents of links on the World Wide Web change continuously. It is advisable that teachers review all links before introducing them to students.*

# Materials, Activities, and web sites

## Activity #1: What is historical fiction?

**Materials:** compare and contrast web, computer(s) with internet access, word processing program for students to store work or paper and pencil

**Sunshine State Standards:** LA.A.1.4.2/LA.A.1.4.4/LA.A.2.4.1/LA.A.2.4.4  
LA.A.2.4.8/LA.B.2.4.2/LA.C.3.4.1/LA.C.3.4.2/LA.C.3.4.3/LA.C.3.4.4/LA.D.2.4.3

### **Objectives:**

1. Students will identify the elements of historical fiction
2. Students will analyze how a work of literature is related to the themes and issues of its historical period.
3. Students will write a short story historical fiction piece using the elements.
4. Students will use technology to gain specific information on a historical event.

**Dimensions of reading:** Evocative, Connective and Reflective

In this activity, students will compare and contrast the definition of historical fiction by comparing and contrasting the words history and fiction using the web provided. A brief discussion will be held determining what the purpose of historical fiction is.

Next, the students will find different Holocaust web sites that have memoirs from Holocaust survivors (Use the following sites if assistance is needed):

[http://www.migs.org/Holocaust\\_Survivor\\_Memoirs.htm](http://www.migs.org/Holocaust_Survivor_Memoirs.htm)

<http://www.igc.org/ddickerson/survivors.html>

<http://www.thirteen.org/religionandethics/week434/feature.html>

<http://history1900s.about.com/homework/history1900s/cs/survivors/>

They will each read a memoir and choose one they feel drawn to. With these memoirs, the students will write a short story pretending to be an additional character that tells the story of the memoir from a different perspective. A brief discussion will be beneficial to help students talk about the time frame of the Holocaust and were some of the major issues and events surrounding it before the writing begins. Once the rough draft is complete, the students will check their story by asking the following questions:

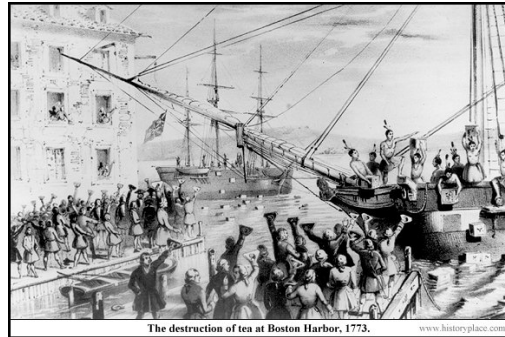
1. Do all the characters have a purpose or role in telling the memory?
2. Is the story based on historical fact?
3. Do the words in the story fit into the time period you were writing about?
4. Have you included dialog and descriptions to make the story interesting?

Students will proofread each other's stories and make revisions. Once completed, the students can post their final copy in html.

**Assessment:** Discuss the elements found in the stories. Did they meet with success by correctly answering the questions within their story? Why or why not?

## **Activity #2: Guidelines in evaluating historical fiction**

**Materials:** class set of copies of the painting, “The destruction of tea at Boston Harbor in 1773,” found at <http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/revolution/revgfx/teaparty.jpg>, copies of the guidelines for using historical fiction, paper, pencil, overhead or chalkboard



### **Sunshine State Standards:**

LA.B.2.4.2/LA.E.2.4.1/LA.E.2.4.2/LA.E.2.4.5/LA.E.2.4.6

### **Objectives:**

1. Students distinguish a painting as either historical fiction or non-fiction using guidelines.
2. Students will analyze how a work of art is related to the themes and issues of its historical period
3. Students will employ strategies to analyze a piece of art using literature guidelines

**Dimensions of Reading:** Evocative, Connective & Reflective

### ***Guidelines for Using Historical Fiction***

Before discussing or writing about an assigned historical novel, it is important for teacher and students to consider some guidelines to evaluate the novel’s historical accuracy. The guidelines for analyzing data can be divided into four main categories: setting, character, plot, and theme. Here are some suggested questions for analyzing historical fiction. Recall that our definition is that “historical novels are about past public events and people and social conditions and are based on historical facts. The historical novelist does not distort historical data for the sake of literary form.”

#### ***I. Setting (time and place)***

- a. Has the author accurately described a particular historical period in the novel? Explain.
- b. List some details that describe the historical period and parallel your study of this particular historical period, e.g. geography, transportation, costume or dress, rural, urban, religious mores, social attitudes.
- c. Are the details of locale authentic in the novel?
- d. Does the description of the locale fit the historical period? Support with specific details.

#### ***II. Characters***

- a. Are there real historical figures whose names you recognize? List them.
- b. Do the historical figures belong in the period described?
- c. Does a check against the history textbook or biographical materials show that the historical characters are accurately portrayed?
- d. Are fictional characters in keeping with the historical setting?
- e. List positive and negative character traits of at least four main real or fictional characters. Show parts of the novel that support this trait.
- f. Explain the characters’ involvement in the historical setting and events.

g. How are the historical characters important to the action of the novel?

### **III. Plot (story line)**

- a. Does the plot focus on a specific historical incident? Explain.
- b. Do the historical characters in the novel participate in a well known historical incident? Explain.
- c. Is the conflict real or fictional?
- d. Do the characters dramatize an eventful moment in the history of Connecticut, or some other familiar place?

### **IV. Theme**

By theme we mean the author's use of people and events from the past to elucidate some truth about a past era.

### **V. Summary**

- a. Why do you think the author chose to write about this particular historical episode?
- b. Is the author revealing any new insights about the historical characters or historical events?
- c. Why is this considered a historical novel?
- d. Is this novel a good or bad historical novel, based on the previous definition of historical fiction?
- a. What social condition in history does the novel reveal?
- b. What comment do you think the author is making about this social condition?
- c. How can this social condition be related to contemporary life?
- d. How do the characters reveal the theme?
- e. Does this novel reflect more than one theme?
- f. Is there more than one point of view about the theme(s)?

Using the guidelines, have student critically review the painting and ask themselves the guiding questions. Have them determine if the painting is considered non-fiction or historical fiction based on their findings. Record their votes and discuss any variances in the results.

**Assessment:** Determine if each student can defend their vote by orally presenting their views using the guidelines as their source of defense.

## **Activity #3 & #4: Stereotypes and Bias**

**Materials:** Writing paper, flip chart and/or large sheets of paper, magic markers, Art supplies (construction paper, scissors, tape, glue, magazines to cut up, etc.),

### **Sunshine State Standards:**

SS.B.2.4/SS.C.2.4/LA.B.2.4.2/LA.D.2.4/LA.E.2.4.1/LA.E.2.4.2/

### **Objectives:**

Students will understand the following:

1. Assumptions can lead to stereotypes and unfair judgments about individuals and groups.
2. Stereotypes and biases affect our lives.
3. Students interpret past events and issues within the context in which an event unfolded rather than solely in terms of present day norms and values.

### **Dimensions of Reading: Evocative, Connective (Racial Stereotypes)**

Begin with a discussion on the concepts of race and ethnicity. Write each word on the board or on a flip chart and ask students to list the attributes that define the terms "race" and "ethnicity." Record their ideas. Next, ask students for the names of five different racial or ethnic groups. Prepare five

large sheets of paper (flip chart paper). At the top of each sheet, write the name of one of the groups that the students named.

Divide the class into five groups and supply each student in the class with a marker. Give each group one of the five sheets of paper. Ask them to list as many stereotypes that are commonly used to describe the category of people written at the top of paper. Give students three minutes to complete the exercise. Emphasize that students should list stereotypes that they have heard, not ones that they necessarily believe to be true.

When they are finished, rotate the sheets of paper between groups so that each group works on a new sheet. Have them add any unlisted stereotype adjectives. Rotate every three minutes until every group has worked on every sheet. Post the sheets in class where everyone can see them and give students five minutes to read the sheets. Conclude the lesson with a discussion on the exercise, asking students the following:

- ☐ How do the stereotypes recorded by the class make you feel?
- ☐ What do you notice about the stereotypes listed? Be aware that the students may have listed good and bad adjectives, many stereotypes for different groups, or the same stereotypes for different groups.
- ☐ Where have you seen these stereotypes portrayed? Television programs, movies, magazines, books?
- ☐ How do you think a stereotype might cause someone to act unfairly toward another person?

### **(Experiencing Bias)**

Before class begins, post around the classroom the 10 pieces of paper generated about assumptions and stereotypes in school and society. Ask students to spend 15-20 minutes writing about a personal experience with biased behavior. Emphasize to students that they should not put their names on their papers. They can share an experience in which they were a victim of biased behavior or in which they witnessed bias. Prompt the class with the following: "Think about a situation when someone made a biased judgment about you or acted unfairly toward you because of your age, skin color, clothes you were wearing, gender, the way you speak, where you live, how much money your family has, or some other reason." 4. Ask students to consider the following questions before they begin to write:

1. How did you know that you were being unfairly judged?
2. What words or actions were directed at you because of assumptions or stereotypes?
3. Why do you think those assumptions were made about you?
4. How did the experience make you feel?
5. How do you think you should have been treated in that situation?

When students are finished, have them pass their papers to the front of the room. Shuffle the papers and pass them back out to the class, making sure no one person has their own paper. Have each student read the personal experience of a classmate.

Have the entire class create a collage by combining the posters from days one and two, the written personal experiences, and pictures and artwork that present how assumptions and stereotypes make them feel. To create these images, provide magazines, construction paper, paint, markers, glue, and scissors. For homework, review the Take Home Activity Sheet: Identifying Stereotypes in the Media with the class. Over the course of several days, they will use this sheet to keep a log of stereotypes they notice in television shows, commercials, or movies. Students should record the name of the show, movie, or product advertised; the group stereotyped; the stereotype portrayed; and

any thoughts or feelings the student experienced while watching the program. Explain that this exercise might not be as easy as it seems; many of us are so accustomed to seeing certain stereotypes that we don't even notice them. ***Encourage students to look for patterns in the images they watch.***

**Assessment :**

This lesson is designed to affect attitudes and receptiveness to new ideas, which are learning outcomes unlikely to be measurable by traditional assessment methods. Teachers should look for students' willingness to participate, openness to new ideas, and their level of empathy toward targets of bias and discrimination. It is important that the basic principles of this lesson—freedom from bias and stereotypes and recognizing individuals—are interwoven into the classroom environment throughout the year. Changing attitudes around bias requires continual reinforcement.

## **Activity #5: Compare and contrast two historical fiction picture books**

**Materials:** Class sets of *From Slave Ship to Freedom Road* by Julius Lester and illustrated by Ron Brown and *Daily Life on a Southern Plantation 1853* by Paul Erickson, Affective Graphic organizer, pencils, compare and contrast web can be used here as well.

**Sunshine State Standards:** LA.A.1.4.2/LA.A.1.4.4/LA.A.2.4.1/LA.A.2.4.4  
LA.A.2.4.8/LA.B.2.4.2/LA.C.3.4.1/LA.C.3.4.2/LA.C.3.4.3/LA.C.3.4.4/LA.D.2.4.3/  
SS.B.2.4/SS.C.2.4/

**Objectives:**

1. Students will learn that assumptions can lead to stereotypes and unfair judgments about individuals and groups.
2. Students identify bias and prejudice in historical interpretations.
3. Students will develop an awareness of dealing with feeling and thoughts about sensitive subjects such as slavery
4. Students will develop the ability to respond to material learned.
5. Students interpret past events and issues within the context in which an event unfolded rather than solely in terms of present day norms and values.

**Dimensions in Reading:** Evocative, Connective, and Reflective

As a frontloading activity, give students a set of facts about slavery and Pre-Civil War times. Ask them to write the facts in the box on the upper portion on the graphic organizer. Ask students to take no more than five minutes to respond to the facts in isolation prior to teaching. After the facts have been explained, ask students to review their original impressions and revise them based on their new understanding of the subject.

Next have students read each picture book through once. Then divide class into two groups, one book will study, analyze, and discuss the Lester book and the other group will do the same with Erickson's book. Tell the students they are to use what background knowledge they have of the Pre Civil-War and critically review their books. They must keep a keen eye on stereotypes, historical fact, discrimination, bias, and use some of the guidelines learned earlier on how to evaluate historical fiction with the books. Have them complete a compare and contrast web depicting what is the same and what is different about the issue of slavery. After allowing time for discussing, facilitate a large group discussion on their findings. Was any bias displayed here? Stereotypes? Are these good examples of historical fiction? Why or why not? What similarities and differences were there?

**Assessment:**

Were students able to distinguish bias in the books? Use the compare and contrast web and their group's participation as a source of evaluation.



***Good Night, Maman***  
**Norma Fox Mazer**

**Grade Level:** 9

**Plot Summary:**

**Good Night, Maman** is a Holocaust survivor story told through the eyes of Karin Levi, a French Jew. The story begins with Karin, her brother, Marc, and their mother (Maman) living in the attic of an unsympathetic and greedy woman in France. The family soon is forced to leave because woman is afraid she'll be caught harboring Jews. The family treks south, walking during the night and sleeping during the day, but in the course of their journey, the children's mother becomes very ill. She insists the children leave her (in the home of a kind man) and that they head to the south of Italy where the Americans have a ship to take Holocaust refugees to the United States. Karin and Marc reluctantly leave their mother.

During the course of her journey to the U.S., Karin begins to write letters to her mother, fully expecting that as soon as she is well, she also will make the trip to the U.S. When Karin and Marc arrive in the United States, they are taken to a refugee/detention camp in Oswego, New York. There Karin and Marc start adjusting to their life in the U.S., although Karin always dreams of returning to France and her dear Maman.

Life in the refugee camp is different for Karin and Marc. At times they feel like they're living in a fish bowl as the townspeople stand outside the fence and watch them. For the most part, the town welcomes the refugees and "adopts" them by finding clothes for all of them and toys for the children. At first the refugees are not allowed to leave the camp, a shut down military base surrounded by barbed wire. Eventually, the restrictions relax and Marc and Karin start school where they find friends, learn more English and try to understand North American culture. Karin continues to write letters to her mother.

Karin eventually learns from Marc that their mother has died. He had found out on the ship coming to America where he met a doctor who had treated her.

Karin and Marc's aunt, who lives in California, sends them train tickets so that they can live with her once President Truman authorizes that the Oswego refugees be allowed to stay in the U.S. The book ends with a touching letter to Maman from Karin.

**Excerpts:**

1. To read the first chapter of **Good Night, Maman**, go to the following website:

[http://www.harperchildrens.com/catalog/excerpt\\_xml.asp?isbn=0064409236](http://www.harperchildrens.com/catalog/excerpt_xml.asp?isbn=0064409236)

2. There were many touching scenes in this book, but some of the most poignant are the ones where the author shows how the North Americans that befriend Karin cannot begin to fathom what she has experienced. In chapter 25, Karin is in the house of her new friend, Peggy. Peggy is giving Karin a tour of the home.

I followed her [Peggy] up the stairs to the attic. Flies buzzed against the dusty windows. Boxes were piled in the corners. "Someone could live up here," I said.

"Oh no. It's too hot. And look, you'd bump your head on the rafters. My dad keeps saying he'll make a playroom up here. Oh, sure—when I'm too old!"

I bent down and opened a small door built into the eaves. "What is this for?"

"Just someplace to put things away."

The space went way back on both sides, under the roof.

"Someone could hide in here," I said.

"I know. Mary used to when she was little—get in there and hide, and everyone would be running around yelling for her. My mom told me."

"More than one person, even." I said.

You would have to squat or lie down, but there was more room here than in the hole we'd dug in Monsieur Taubert's cellar. You could hardly tell the door was there. All you'd have to do was cover it with a trunk, and if they didn't pull the trunk away, you'd be safe from the soldiers.

In chapter 27, there is another example of this kind of exchange. Karin has been invited to Peggy's house for Thanksgiving.

Later, when the pies and ice cream came out, Peggy's uncle asked me about the war. Every time he asked a question, everyone would stop talking and look at me.

"So, was it awful over there, young lady?" he said.

"Yes, yes. It was."

"And you and your brother—Peggy says you're all alone over here?"

"Well, we are with other people in the fort."

"Now, how did you parents let you come here all alone?"

"How—" I started to stutter. "My—my—mother, you see—"

"Her mother was too sick to come," Peggy put in. I had told her a little, but not everything.

"Your mother was sick, young lady?"

"Yes."

Most of his questions I answered like that, just yes or no. I didn't know what else to say. What could I say when he asked if Marc and I had escaped from the Nazis? *Yes*, but it wasn't something that happened in a single moment or a single day or even a single month.

To tell it, where would I start? With the yellow stars we had to wear? With being put out of school? Or would it be with Papa's arrest? And if I told them that much, then I'd have to go on, about Madame Zetain, and Monsieur Taubert, and all the rest of it.

I smiled when they looked at me. I liked being there with Peggy's family, and I could tell that her mother, especially, was happy to have me there. I didn't want to have any sad thoughts. Just once, though, I thought, *We Levis aren't a big family—not anymore*. And for a little while, I was quiet.

### Materials:

Scrapbooks, glue, scissors, markers (gel pens and scrapbooks with black pages would ideal for this activity although regular notebooks would work)

## Activity 1:

Objectives and materials: listed on the website lesson plan

Sunshine State Standards: LA.B1.4.2/LA.B.1.4.3/LA.B.2.4.2/LA.B.2.4.3

Frontloading activity procedure (evocative dimension of reading):

1. Go to the following website and follow the procedure listed in steps one through 5.
2. Have students complete the journal assignment, but they will do their journaling in their scrapbook. Students should do a rough draft of the journaling assignment before entering it into their scrapbooks.

[http://askeric.org/cgi-bin/printlessons.cgi/Virtual/Lessons/Social\\_Studies/World\\_History/Holocaust/HOL0201.html](http://askeric.org/cgi-bin/printlessons.cgi/Virtual/Lessons/Social_Studies/World_History/Holocaust/HOL0201.html)

## Activity 2:

Objectives:

1. Students will become more familiar with the events leading up to the Holocaust, the events comprising it, and its after-effects.
2. Provide students with background knowledge necessary to understand the historical context of the events depicted in **Good Night, Maman**.

Dimensions of reading: I think this activity could be classified under both the evocative and connective dimensions of reading. By viewing the panels of the Holocaust, students are better able to understand the characters in the text and their situation. This activity also connects the literature to life. Students are able to connect the story with a historical event.

Sunshine State Standards: LA.A.1.4.2/LA.A.1.4.4/LA.A.2.4.1/LA.A.2.4.4  
LA.A.2.4.8/LA.B.2.4.2/LA.C.3.4.1/LA.C.3.4.2/LA.C.3.4.3/LA.C.3.4.4/LA.D.2.4.3

Procedure:

1. While reading **Good Night, Maman**, students will go to the following website and view "The Courage to Remember," 40 panels about the Holocaust. (Perhaps this could be done in pairs.)

<http://motlc.wiesenthal.com/resources/courage/links.html>

2. After viewing the panels, students will copy the three images and the three quotes which most affected them. They will glue these into their scrapbooks and write what it was about these images/quotes that affected them.
3. Students will share their scrapbook pages in small groups, explaining why they chose their pictures and quotes.

## Activity 3:

Objectives:

1. Students will reflect on and write about their personal connections with the text.
2. Students will analyze and write about the text critically.

Dimensions of reading: both connective and reflective.

Sunshine State Standards:

LA.B.2.4.2/LA.E.2.4.1/LA.E.2.4.2/LA.E.2.4.5/LA.E.2.4.6

Procedures:

1. Students will keep a response journal in their scrapbooks. Instructions are located at:  
<http://www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/score/actbank/tjouguide.htm>

## Activity 4:

Objectives:

1. Students will write from different perspectives and for a variety of purposes.
2. Students will use effective speaking/presentation skills.

Dimensions of reading: Connective as students may use their letters as a way to connect the characters' lives to their own. Reflective because students may write an evaluative letter to the author, or write about the choices the author made in telling the story.

Sunshine State Standards:

LA.A1.4.4/LA.A.2.4.2/LA.A.2.4.3/LA.B.1.4.2/LA.B.1.4.3/LA.B.2.4.1/LA.B.2.4.3/  
LA.E.2.4.6/LA.C.1.4.1/LA.C.1.4.3/LA.C.3.4.1/LA.C.3.4.2/LA.C.3.4.3/LA.C.3.4.4

Procedure:

1. After finishing **Good Night, Maman**, students will write three letters:
  - A. Reader to character
  - B. Reader to author
  - C. Character to character
2. Students will proofread letters and then enter them into their scrapbooks.
3. Students will then share their completed scrapbooks in small groups.

## Other Activities:

1. Students could decorate the covers of their scrapbooks.

2. A story representation like we did in class would be a great culminating activity. Students could glue their cutouts into their scrapbooks, or if they have objects, could take pictures of them, and glue those into their scrapbooks. Their SRIs would be good to include as well.

## **Assessment:**

Scrapbooks – 1000 points. Each activity recorded in the scrapbook is worth 250 points. Scrapbooks are evaluated on their thoughtfulness and clarity of expression.

**Good Night, Maman** lesson plans submitted by Kim Cook.

# *Nightjohn*

Gary Paulsen

**Grade Level:** 9

**Plot Summary:**

Sarny, a twelve-year-old female slave who lives at the Waller plantation, tells the story of Nightjohn, a man who had escaped slavery and traveled north, but returns to the South with one purpose in mind—to teach slaves to read. He does this knowing that the punishment for reading is dismemberment and sometimes worse. Upon his return, Nightjohn is captured and returned to slavery, being bought by Sarny's cruel owner, Clel Waller. Nightjohn offers to teach Sarny to read, which she willingly accepts. In her excitement over her new skills, she absentmindedly writes letters in the soil just to be caught in the act by Waller who beats her and demands to know who taught her. Someone has to pay!

**Excerpt:**

The following website has an excerpt from the last few pages (pp.38-41) of chapter three and a link to an audio recording of Gary Paulsen reading it. In this passage, Nightjohn begins teaching Sarny to read while sharing what may happen to him for teaching her and her for learning. He starts at the beginning—letter A. In Sarny's words, "I didn't know what letters was, not what they meant, but I thought it might be something I wanted to know. To learn."

<http://www.randomhouse.com/anchor/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=0440219361&view=excerpt>

**Description of Materials:**

Class sets of *Nightjohn*

Clustering graphic organizer (<http://www.eduplace.com/rdg/hme/graphorg/pdf/cluster.pdf>)

Spiral notebooks (one per student)

Black vernacular variations transparencies and/or student handouts

(<http://edu-ss10.educ.queensu.ca/~qbell/update/tint/postmodernism/var1.html>)

(<http://edu-ss10.educ.queensu.ca/~qbell/update/tint/postmodernism/var2.html>)

T-chart graphic organizer (<http://www.eduplace.com/rdg/hme/graphorg/pdf/tchart.pdf>)

Assorted arts and crafts materials for mobiles

Computer with Internet access

Assorted non-fiction books about slavery

MLA style manual

# Activity 1:

(Evocative Dimension)

Objectives:

1. The student will brainstorm prior knowledge about slavery.
2. The student will work cooperatively with a partner to complete a clustering graphic organizer that combines ideas and categorizes them.

Materials:

Clustering graphic organizer (<http://www.eduplace.com/rdg/hme/graphorg/pdf/cluster.pdf>)

Sunshine State Standards: LA.A.1.4/LA.B.1.4/LA.B.2.4/LA.C.1.4

Activating Prior Knowledge Procedure (Think-Pair-Share):

1. Think: Individually, students will brainstorm and list what they know about slavery.
2. Pair: Students will meet in pairs, compare their lists, and categorize their ideas (such as historical setting, typical life, literacy issues, and (mis)treatment by owners) using a clustering graphic organizer. One student will complete the organizer and the other will be prepared to share it with the whole group.
3. Share: The spokesperson of one pair will share one category and attributes with the whole group while the teacher (or a student) records this information on an expanded version of the clustering graphic organizer. As others present, new categories and attributes will be added. If no one has mentioned that slaves were not allowed to read, the teacher will provide details and ask students to provide reasons for this based on a slave owner's perspective.

# Activity 2:

(Evocative Dimension)

Objectives:

1. The student will make predictions based on features of the novel.
2. The student will identify common linguistic features and patterns of Black vernacular dialect.
3. The student will recognize that dialects or the people who speak them are not inferior to Standard English.
4. The student will explain the rationale of the use of Black vernacular in this novel.

Materials:

Black vernacular variations transparencies and/or student handouts (see source below)

Sunshine State Standards: LA.A.1.4/LA.C.1.4/LA.D.1.4/LA.D.2.4/LA.E.2.4

Frontloading Activity Procedure:

1. The teacher will refer pairs to the book and give them five minutes to examine and discuss predictions about the contents and literary aspects.
2. Students will share predictions and comments.

3. The teacher will indicate that the book is written in Black vernacular dialect (if students have not mentioned this in the previous step) and ask why they think the author did this. S/he will indicate that like all dialects, Black vernacular has regular linguistic features (refer to <http://www.cal.org/ericcll/faqs/rgos/dialects.html>).
4. To exemplify this and to prepare students who may have difficulty in reading the story because of unfamiliarity with the linguistic style, the teacher will overview Black vernacular variations using a transparency (and/or providing handouts) of variations using the following websites: <http://edu-ss10.educ.queensu.ca/~qbell/update/tint/postmodernism/var1.html>  
<http://edu-ss10.educ.queensu.ca/~qbell/update/tint/postmodernism/var2.html>
5. In pairs, students will read the first to pages of the story and find these or other patterns of Black vernacular. They will share their finding with the whole group.

## Activity 3:

(Evocative and Connective Dimensions)

Objectives:

1. The student will list actions and characteristics of a character.
2. The student will describe personal connections to a character.
3. The student will create a mobile that represents a character.
4. The student will make an oral presentation.

Materials:

T-chart graphic organizer (<http://www.eduplace.com/rdg/hme/graphorg/pdf/tchart.pdf>)

Assorted arts and crafts materials for mobiles

Sunshine State Standards: LA.A.1.4/LA.B.2.4/LA.C.3.4/LA.E.1.4/LA.E.2.4

Procedure:

1. Students will be given spiral notebooks to complete as they read. On facing pages, the student will write the name of one of the more important characters (Sarny, Nightjohn, Clem Weller, or Mammy) on the left side. On the other side, they will write their own name. As they read daily, they will list characteristics and actions on the character side. On the other side, they will make personal responses, such as descriptions of their interpretations of the character's behavior, advice to the character, what they would say or do in the same situation, their feelings as they read about the character, the relationship of the character to an event or someone they know, and applications to their own lives.
2. After reading the book, the students will make character mobiles that they will design using words or symbolic representations of the character.
3. The students will present their mobiles to class. Each student will describe at least one way they connected with the character in step one.

## Activity 4:

(Connective and Reflective Dimension)

Objectives:

1. The student will conduct research about the historical accuracy of the novel.



2. The student will write a formal report based on research and personal opinion.
3. The student will participate in a debate.

Materials:

Computer with Internet access

Assorted non-fiction books about slavery

MLA style manual

Sunshine State Standards: LA.A.1.4/LA.A.2.4/LA.B.1.4/LA.B.2.4/LA.D.1.4/LA.E.2.4

Procedure:

1. In pairs, student will conduct research to determine the historical accuracy of the novel and to locate new information that helps with their understanding of the setting, plot, or characters using related questions such as those found in Appendix A, number 2 of the following website: <http://www.indiana.edu/~l535/work6-1.html>. Students will be required to use four sources, two Internet and two non-fiction books. Before researching, students will develop and submit plans to the teacher that describe the division of labor for this and the following step.
2. The pairs will write a formal paper to summarize their findings, which includes references and citations using MLA style. They will also include in their paper responses to the following questions: Does the historical accuracy contribute to the effectiveness of the story? How or how not?
3. After the papers are completed, students will debate about the questions posed for this activity.

## Assessment:

Activity 3: Notebook entries—50 points, mobile creativity and symbolism—25 points, presentation 10 points.

Activity 4: Research—25 points, paper—75 points, and debate—15 points.

Total points: 200

**Online lesson plans and author information about Nightjohn can be found at the following websites:**

<http://faculty.ssu.edu/~elbond/night2.htm>

<http://www3.wcu.edu/~mwarner/nj.htm>

<http://www.randomhouse.com/features/garypaulsen/about.html>

<http://basrc.org/bandl/k12units/nightjohn/understanding.html>

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/iditarod/paulsen.htm>

# ***My Brother Sam is Dead***

James Lincoln Collier

Christian Collier

## **Plot Summary**

The novel “My Brother Sam is Dead” is set in the area of southwestern Connecticut, during the Revolutionary War. The small town of Redding, Connecticut, located just northwest of Fairfield, was a Tory town and the home of a nonpartisan family, the Meekers. The novel begins with Sam, a young college student at Yale, leaving school and returning home to fight for “his country”. Sam has gone home to borrow his father’s Brown Bess, a celebrated shooting musket, and he plans to join the Continental Army to fight the “lobsterbacks”. A major problem arises for Sam when his father refuses to let him take the firearm and curses Sam for planning to get involved in the fighting. Mr. Meeker is adamantly against all wars and tells Sam that by fighting he is committing treason against the King of England.

The story is narrated by Sam’s younger brother Tim, who watches the war edge closer and closer until troop movements engulf his family and surrounding areas. Young Tim looks on as his loyalist father and his rebel partisan older brother confront each other but can never make much sense of their political differences. Sam causes his family severe anguish when he runs away to fight with the Continental Army.

This book realistically deals with the horrors of war, carefully blending fact and fiction to reveal the agony and suffering of one Connecticut family. What begins for Tim as a kind of strange adventure turns sharply disturbing. Tim witnesses the brutal murder of a patriot slave at the hands of the British soldiers. Ned’s murder causes Tim to rethink his loyalties. The Patriots are also depicted in a harsh and realistic light when Tim’s father is imprisoned for allegedly selling his cattle to the British. Tim never sees his father again.

The novel ends tragically with Sam being convicted and subsequently executed by the Patriots for a crime that he did not commit. It’s the human cost of war and not the political issues involved that Tim comes to understand so well. This is a sobering tale that will leave readers with a mature view of history and war.

**This plot summary was borrowed from the following website -**  
**<http://130.132.143.21/vnhti/curriculum/units/1997/2/97.02.01.x.html>**

### **Key Scene Book Excerpt (page 197-198)**

“How are you, Sam?” I said.

“Oh I’m all right for a man about to die.”

“Don’t give up hope,” I said, “I’ve just seen General Putnam. He said he’d consider your case.”

“Is that right?” he said. “Really?”

“He said he would.”

“What did he actually say?” Sam said, “Does he believe I’m not guilty?”

“I don’t know,” I said. “He didn’t say.”

“You’re a good boy, Tim”

“Sam, how come they found you guilty?”

“I guess I didn’t score enough telling points,” he said.

“No, really.”

“The other men lied. They knew they were in for it right from the moment I spotted them in the training ground. I only saw one of them at first, and I leveled the musket at him. But the other one was down on the ground in the shadows, gutting the cow, and he came up behind me and stuck his knifepoint against my back. So they got me. Then they bashed me around a little and took me in. Oh, they were smart. They had a story all worked out about hearing somebody shout “Stop thief”, and seeing me driving the cattle across the training ground, and coming out to get me. And of course I wasn’t supposed to be at home anyway. I was supposed to be on duty at the Betts’ house. So that went against me. And that was that.”

“What else can we do, Sam?”

“Pray, I guess. You’d better have Mother do that; the Lord is more likely to believe her than you, Tim.” He grinned. I grinned back; but I felt all sick inside.

Then the guard said, “Time’s up, lad.”

“I’ll try to get back to see you again, Sam,” I said.

“Say hello to Betsy for me,” he said.

“Yes”

“And Mother”, he said.

“Yes” I said. “And I’ll try to think up some more telling points for General Putnam, too.” He grinned. “You’re the best brother I’ve got, Tim.”

I tried to grin back. “I better be.”

“Come on you,” the guard said. So I waved goodbye and left.

## Activity One – K-W-L (**LA.A.1.4**)

Before beginning our reading of the book “My Brother Sam is Dead” I will use the frontloading technique of the K-W-L chart to help organize and focus students attention on the Revolutionary War. Students will begin by making three columns on a sheet of paper. Students will title the paper “Revolutionary War”. Because student knowledge of the Revolutionary War may be limited, the class will work on completing the “K” column of the chart, on what they know about the war, as a group. Then students will be asked to complete the “W” column of what they want to know about the war. If students are struggling with coming up with good questions, this part of the chart can also be done as a group. Then I would explain to students that once we have finished the book “My Brother Sam is Dead” we will fill in the “L” column, on what we have learned about the Revolutionary War.

This activity is related to course materials in that it is taken from Chapter Four entitled “Frontloading; Teaching Before Reading” of the Jeffrey Wilhelm text, “Strategic Reading”. The objective of this activity would be to: activate background knowledge, help the reader set purposes and serve as a template for what is learned (Wilhelm, 115.) Materials would only involve a piece of paper and a chalkboard, or something similar, for the teacher to post student input to the columns. By analyzing student’s “L” columns, to be completed at the conclusion of the book, the teacher could make an assessment of what knowledge students had gained about the Revolutionary War after reading “My Brother Sam is Dead”.

## Activity Two – Oral Interpretation **(LA.C.3.4)**

Students would be assigned to read the first five chapters of “My Brother Sam is Dead”, prior to this activity. The class will be divided into literary circle groups. Each group will be assigned to complete a literary circle presentation called an oral interpretation. To do this each group will select an important or pivotal scene from one of the first five chapters of the book. Once students have made their selections they will practice reading the scene aloud. During the presentation, the context of the scene will be explained and the scene will be read aloud by group members. After the reading, the significance of the scene in the overall plot will be explored by having students predict where this scene is leading the course of the story.

This activity is related to course materials in that it brings readers of the book into the evocative dimension of reading. The objective of this activity is to bring students into the evocative dimension by having students predict and formulate expectations about story action, by having students become a part of the story and make judgments about the characters. Materials might involve a copy of the scene from the text with markings for the read aloud and paper for students to write down the significance of the scene they chose. This activity will be judged successful if it leads students to make accurate predictions of where the plot is going and if it creates a connection between the students and the characters in the story. The latter can only be judged by how much students get into the presentations and predictions.

## Activity Three – Text to Self **(LA.B.2.3)**

Students will have been instructed to read chapters six through ten of “My Brother Sam is Dead” prior to this activity. Students will be given a copy of the scene where Tim confronts the cowboys, pages 122-126. While re-reading the scene students will be instructed to note connections to their experiences along the margins of their paper. After re-reading this scene students will be asked to complete a “Text to Self Connection Diagram” by drawing conclusions about how this text reminds them of their own experiences, by filling in the pieces of the circle diagram.

By having students make explicit connections between their personal experiences and characters’ experiences, students are brought into the connective dimension of reading. For example students may explore times, like Tim, when they have been scared but have had to make courageous decisions. They also may connect to the idea of a life-changing event. Materials needed would be a copy of the scene for students to read and a “Text to Self Connections Diagram”. Students could use the margins of the paper that their diagram is on to make notes on their connections to the experience related in the chosen scene. This activity will be judged a success if students are able to make connections between themselves and the text scene chosen.

## Activity Four – Symbolic Story Representation (SRI) **(LA.E.2.3)**

Students will be assigned to complete the book prior to this activity. Additionally, prior to this activity the teacher will model an SRI for students and will assist students in creating a SRI as a class before students are expected to create an SRI on their own.

To assist students in planning their own SRI, students will complete a “SRI Planning Sheet” (see example attached taken from Jeffrey Wilhelm text “Strategic Planning”). Students will be instructed to share these planning sheets with their literature circle, and then with the teacher, prior to their SRI presentations.

The teacher will then meet with the student to discuss the scene they have chosen to dramatize and their “SRI Planning Sheet”. The scene chosen should be one that the student had a strong response to and that is important to the story. During the discussion of the planning sheet the teacher will ask the student to reflect on how they read the text and what they have chosen as a reader cutout to symbolize how they saw themselves as they read the scene (students may want to use more than one reader cutout if they took different positions as the reader). The teacher will also review the five different moves the student identified having made as they read the scene. Additionally, the teacher will discuss the author with the student; how has the student chosen to represent the author, how did the author construct the scene, what was his purpose and meaning, and why did the author compose the text in a particular way? After exploring these questions the teacher will look at the three general life ideas identified by the student as the ones the author repeats and communicates throughout the scene. The student will be encouraged to dramatize these ideas through symbolic representations. Lastly, students will be asked several questions to help aid their presentation of their authorial reading (see “SRI Planning Sheet” attached).

The teacher should communicate to students that they are required to dramatize their scene through their symbolic representations of; themselves, the moves they made, the author and the author’s purpose and message. They should think of their SRI as a play or puppet show used to help their audience visualize their scene. Students will be told to rehearse their scene. They will also be asked to predict what questions may be asked of them by other groups after their presentations. After giving students two to three class periods to complete the above, students will make an eight to ten minute presentation of their Symbolic Story Representation (SRI).

The SRI activity was taken from chapter six, “Building on Different Strengths to Make Reading Visible”, of the Jeffrey Wilhelm book, “Strategic Reading”. According to Wilhelm, a SRI is a technique that assists readers by providing them with an outlet for explaining what a specific text is about and how they read it (Wilhelm 157). This activity brings students into the reflective dimension of reading by having students: consider the significance of a text; recognize literary conventions and reading as a transaction; and evaluate author and self as reader. The only materials needed would be the “SRI Planning Sheet” attached. Success of this activity will be measured by how well students master authorial reading of a text, as demonstrated through their Symbolic Story Representations (SRI).

## Conclusion

After completing the previous four activities the teacher will conclude the reading of “My Brother Sam is Dead” by returning to the K-W-L charts to complete the “L” column on what students have learned about the Revolutionary War. At this time the teacher may want to lead a discussion on the effects of war in general and/or explore what Tim Meekers’ father, Life, meant by the statement “In war the dead pay the debts for the living”. This discussion would lead students into the next book to be examined.

## **SRI Planning Sheet**

Before you begin to prepare your SRI, please answer the following questions to make sure that you have thought through how your presentation will meet all criteria. After answering the following questions, please share them with a member of your reading group and then with me. This pre-conference is required prior to your SRI presentation.

### **General Processes**

1. How does your reader cutout(s) reveal what you did as a reader and how you situated yourself in this scene? How does it describe you as a reader?
2. List five “moves” that you made (things you did, felt, saw, noticed, connected to, thought about, questioned, etc.) as you read this scene.
  - A.
  - B.
  - C.
  - D.
  - E.

### **Considering the Author**

1. Describe how your author cutout/symbolic representation shows when you considered the author and what you think about the author of this scene or short story. Consider your thinking about how the author constructed this scene and what meaning you think he is trying to convey through that construction.
  - A. What do you think of the author? How will you show this?
  - B. What do you think of how the author constructed this scene? How will you show this?
  - C. What do you think the author means to communicate in this scene? How will you represent this?
2. List three general images, life ideas, or motifs that the author seems to repeat during the scene. How will you represent these with cutouts or symbolic representations?
  - A.
  - B.
  - C.

## **Discussing/Presenting Your Authorial Reading**

1. What do you notice within the text that leads you to believe you should pay attention to these particular ideas?
2. How did you represent this textual coding in your SRI?
3. Why do you think the author drew your attention to these ideas? What do you think is his own “take” or generalization about these issues? How will you show how you noticed and interpreted these authorial moves with moves of your own?
4. Please explain how you agree, would adapt, or resist the author’s generalization about these issues? How will you show this response through your reader cutout and other cutouts or objects? How has this scene helped inform your thinking about the theme of our unit of study?
5. What extra creative elements did you add to your scene and why (e.g. music, symbolic representations (found objects), backgrounds, etc.)? How do these demonstrate something essential about what you read and how you read it?

*My Brother Sam is Dead* lesson plans created by Dawn Forman

# Multimedia & Extending Activities

## Activities for any History text:

1. Memorabilia Bags—While reading the text, have students gather a minimum number of items (whatever amount you think is possible/fair) to act as representatives of their stories. Tell students to compose a list of the items and briefly explain how the item is relevant to the text.
2. A Dictionary of Terms—Have students select a set number of vocabulary words from their individual texts (this number should vary depending on the length of the text). Students should find others who have identified the same words and collaborate to define the word. All vocabulary words should be gathered into a list and published in a class dictionary for that unit. *This activity has special pertinence to a historical unit because the likelihood of encountering technical terms, slang, or outdated words will increase. Perhaps this should be one of the first activities introduced and a due date given for halfway through the unit so students have enough time to have gathered words, as well as having enough time remaining for the dictionary to be useful to remind readers of a word's definition.*
3. Additional Annotations of Nonfiction Articles—Each student should be required to find and write an annotation for at least one outside newspaper, journal, or magazine article that relates in some way to their reading. Students should photocopy the text and make their annotations through either color-coding (teacher should provide a key for the requirements and colors) or sticky notes. Correct bibliographic information should be attached as well. *Again, this activity is significant for a historical study because many points of view exist on historical events depending on who was involved and who the source is. Bias in reporting on historical events should be addressed as well. This activity may lead students to information confirming their study or refuting it, which may arouse the students' interest and further the study!*
4. A Timeline—Take butcher paper and tape it on two walls or halfway around the classroom at eye level. Segment the paper by year starting with the first significant date of the time period your historical unit focuses on and ending with the last significant date of the same issue. Leave room for students to extend the line in either direction, if necessary. Draw a line, horizontally, about one third of the way down the entire length of the paper. While the students are reading their texts, have them jot down on scrap paper all dates and information, paraphrased, about the material they are reading. On the top third of the butcher paper, have students record historic dates with their corresponding events in black ink. On the bottom two thirds, have students write the corresponding vignettes about the people they are reading about. (It may be helpful to keep the responses color-coded if you are using multiple texts in your study.) Have students initial by their entries so that those interested in the information can seek out the “expert” for that topic. *This activity creates an ever-present graphic representation of the sequence of events for the unit. It also allows for students to see what is going on in their text compared to other's texts, as well as demonstrates the actual effects of the historical event on people and places.*
5. A Map Display—If your historical unit focuses on several different settings, it may be useful to have a map displaying the area and marking off movements throughout as they occur. With the addition of this display, students can keep track of events—the when and where—while also discovering some geographical information about the setting.



6. A Classroom Museum—Each student should bring in an artifact representative of the historical time period being studied. Consultation with grandparents, parents, and even community members may unearth some genuine treasures to complement the study. (An easy example would be to bring in some currency from the country the book is set in, like pounds from England.)  
In addition to this artifact, students should bring in at least 3 pictures depicting the time period. Have students form teams through the creation of logical groupings of the pictures. Each team should arrange the pictures for a display on room dividers/plywood/science fair boards. Have students research, write, and record information about their pictures on cassette recorders. (This extra will allow for a “guided tour” of the museum, as well as offer students a chance to do more research on the topic under an authentic purpose—for the museum!) Depending on how many artifacts can be gathered, or the quality of the pictures and research component, other classes could be invited in to tour the museum and students could act as “curators” explaining the items and their significance to the historical study.
7. A Documentary/Montage—Students prepare a videotaped segment with either factual information accompanying pictures/diagrams/timelines (documentary) or use pictures/images set to an appropriate music selection (montage).
8. Current Events—Whenever a historical unit focuses on a problem or a significant issue, connections to current events should be made. Questions such as how to prevent a reoccurrence of the event/problem and if conditions around the world are conducive for such an occurrence to happen again should be addressed. News articles or other items relevant to the discussion should be brought in to class.
9. Historical Fiction Activity—When using historical fictions in the classroom, special attention should be paid to different texts concerning the topic at hand. Students should be asked to consult at least 2 outside sources to compare and contrast the accuracy of the facts presented in their historical fiction texts. This activity will lead to continued involvement with the topic as well as allow the student a chance to play critic to a text studied.

Ideas from *Adolescent Literature as a Complement to the Classics*, Vol. One. Edited by Joan Kaywell.

### **Activities for a Civil War Unit:**

1. Role Play—Before starting the unit, randomly draw roles for each student in the class to assume throughout the entire Civil War Unit. The roles should be generic characters (i.e. farmer, soldier, housewife, slave, child, politician, recent immigrant, etc.) from either the North or the South. If possible, keep the North-South designations equal in number. Throughout the unit, students should keep a character diary in which they create their character filling in details such as hometown, family life, political views, and education. (All characteristics should be true to their assignment of position and North/South and research should be a continuous part of this process.) Once students have fully created their persona, pairs will be made matching one North student with one South student as a pen pal. During the exercise these pen pals will write four letters to one another after the particular occurrences:
  - (1) April 1861—After Lincoln’s election and the fall of Ft. Sumter
  - (2) July 1863—After Vicksburg & Gettysburg

(3) April 1865—Following the war's end and Lincoln's assassination

(4) 1875—Near the end of the Reconstruction

(These dates and events may be changed to suit the teacher's interests.) Each student will be responsible for keeping the letters he/she receives and at the end of the unit will introduce his/her pen pal persona to the class. To further the unit, the letters could be published in a class anthology and a study of an authentic Civil War letter anthology could be included (see book list for 2 suggestions).

## Ideas from David Rodgers at <http://tlc.ai.org/lessons/civwarpp.htm>

2. Virtual Museums & Web Sites of Interest—The “Causes of the American Civil War” virtual museum may be found at <http://www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/score/cwvm/cwvmtg.htm>. This site contains separate Exhibit Halls for topics including “evaluation of abolitionist techniques” and “summary of attitudes about sectionalism.” A cyber activity specifically related to *Nightjohn* is found on <http://www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/civwnov/civilwar7.htm>. Another lesson for *Nightjohn* is located at <http://www.d300.kane.k12.il.us/EngageII/hms/HMSengaged/page5.htm>. Other great sites include [www.civilwar.com](http://www.civilwar.com) and <http://www.americancivilwar.com>.

3. Miscellaneous—A Civil War Slang Dictionary can be found at <http://genie.esu10.k12.ne.us/~dmahalek/slang.html>. This could be an excellent activity to correspond to the unit dictionary suggestion from earlier, or could stand on its own. After viewing this site, students should keep track of slang terms they come across in their own readings and work in groups to define the words. This also offers the teacher a time to address dialect, which is found in many slave narratives and in *Nightjohn*. Also found on the civilwar.com page is a link to music and lyrics from popular civil war tunes. This site offers sound bites of the tunes and lyrics. The lyrics could be printed out and used for a cross-comparison between the language of the two sides (North and South). Rallying songs, sentimental songs, and other categories are offered for both sides allowing an awesome opportunity to see the emotional reactions of the differing sides and what inspired each to fight until the end.
4. Movie Suggestions—The following movie suggestions have been pulled from textbooks, lesson plans, and web sites. As with all media, teachers should view items the entire way through before showing in a class. Also community considerations and class maturity should be evaluated before viewing.
- (1) *Glory*
  - (2) *The 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts*
  - (3) *Biggest Battles of the Civil War*
  - (4) *Gettysburg Civilians (A & E presentation)*
  - (5) *Civil War Journal (History Channel)*
  - (6) *Nightjohn* (Disney movie)

**Extending the Unit:**

Any unit focusing on the Civil War could easily flow into the study of African American Literature in the form of slave narratives, spirituals, and the coded language of the Underground Railroad/runaway slaves. The amount of literature on this subject is varied and can be pursued depending on each teacher's purposes for the study. A good text to start looking for information is the *Norton Anthology of African American Literature*. A site offering a slavery unit can be found at <http://volweb.utk.edu/Schools/bedford/harrisms/tlgunit.htm>. Another site with a three week slavery unit including the book *Nightjohn* may be found at <http://www.indiana.edu/~l535/work6-1.html>.

## Activities for a Revolutionary War Unit:

1. Role Play—In order for the students to truly experience how the colonials felt under the forced rules of the English government, enlist the help of another class to create a set of rules for the unit. These rules must be followed under all circumstances and privileges will be taken away if the rules are disregarded. After the first 2 days, allow for a representative from the rule-makers to come in for a “hearing” of grievances, but do not lift the restrictions. After this initial meeting, no contact between the two parties may be made for the remainder of the week with all rules still intact. Also develop a token system for work or good behavior and tell the students that they can use the tokens to buy items at a class auction at the end of the week. When quite a few tokens have been collected, begin taxing them to use the bathroom, get water, etc. After a week of this enforced code and taxation, allow for response time and comparison to the colonials’ situation. [I cannot find the source of this idea.]
2. Virtual Museums & Web Sites of Interest—A site called “From Revolution to Reconstruction” can be found at <http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/>. This site is a hypertext book on American history containing a link called “War for Independence” related to this topic. PBS also has extensive information available at <http://www.pbs.org/ktxa/liberty/chronicle/timeline.html>. Information about Betsy Ross can be located on the “Betsy Ross House” site at <http://www.ushistory.org/betsy/flaghome.html>.
3. Miscellaneous—A Revolutionary Period-Boston Scavenger Hunt can be found at <http://lee.boston.k12.ma.us/D4/curr/rev/revscav.asp>. The questions found here contain hyperlinked pages to help students on their hunt. Also on the Betsy Ross page there is a link explaining how to make a 5 pointed star with the web address <http://www.ushistory.org/betsy/flagstar.html>.
4. Movie Suggestions—The same disclaimer about viewing and community-class considerations applies!
  - (1) Johnny Tremain (Disney)
  - (2) 1776 (Film based on a Broadway musical about the creation of the Declaration of Independence)
  - (3) Revolution (with Al Pacino)

## Activities for a Holocaust Unit:

1. Role-Play—Due to the Holocaust’s sensitive subject, I would suggest that a teacher use discretion as to whether or not engage in a simulation. If the climate is right, the teacher could divide the class in half according to some arbitrary characteristics (remember the famous blue-eyed, brown-eyed psychological experiment with elementary kids? I don’t recall the experiment name.). One half of the students would then be considered above the others and receive special privileges during the simulation period (perhaps 2-3 days). These “first class” students could go to lunch early, be the first to leave the class at the end of the period, have automatic bathroom and water privileges, etc. The teacher should treat these students better than the others, call on them more often, and reward them with more praise, bonus points, etc. Have a day of debriefing to discuss both sides’ reactions to the simulation and then reverse the roles for the remainder of the week. At the end of this simulation, when both sides have been “first class” students, discuss stereotypes, prejudice, and the effects of the experiment. *Again, the nature of a Holocaust study requires sensitivity on the parts of both teacher and students. As such, this simulation should only take place in a conducive environment and ample time given for both sides to discuss their reactions and the effects of discrimination/prejudice.*
2. Virtual Museums & Web Sites of Interest—Some wonderful virtual museums exist for Holocaust materials, however some are very large and as such require extended periods of time to view. Please keep that in mind when choosing a site for a cyber activity. You can lead your students on a virtual tour of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum at <http://www.ushmm.org/>. Another tour of the exhibit “The Courage to Remember” may be viewed at the Simon Wiesenthal Center at <http://www.wiesenthal.com/>. The University of South Florida also has a virtual museum, which was referred to in the Holocaust lesson plans for this unit. Also found on this site is a “Teacher’s Guide to the Holocaust”, located at <http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/holocaust/holocaustguide.org>.

Students can view the museum of Anne Frank’s house located in Amsterdam at <http://www.annefrank.nl>.

To discuss prejudice and discrimination in current times, as well as what the students can do to prevent these occurrences, visit the “Stop the Hate” web site at <http://www.stopthehate.org>. A school safety survey can also be found on this site.

3. Miscellaneous—The Holocaust Museum of Houston is gathering materials for a “trunk” that they will ship out for a month at a time which includes class sets of several books (including *Night* and *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*), Resource Guides, videos, CD’s, posters, etc. [I found this information in the January 2001 *Notes Plus*, so I think the best place for contact info will be the Houston Holocaust Museum: <http://www.hmh.org/default.htm>.]

Another online activity involves the use of the *New York Times* archives of front pages from 1933 to present. Have students research and collect headlines of the time period and analyze how much information the American public was receiving.

4. Movie Suggestions— The same disclaimer about viewing and community-class considerations applies!

(1) *Anne Frank Remembered*

- (2) *The Diary of Anne Frank*
- (3) *Au Revoir les Enfants*
- (4) *Life Is Beautiful*
- (5) *Shoah*
- (6) *Sophie's Choice*
- (7) *Not in Our Town*
- (8) *Schindler's List*—An alternative assignment for students not allowed to watch this movie could involve researching the life of Oscar Schindler and writing a brief summary of his actions to save Jewish people. The writing should consider whether or not he was a “hero” with an explanation of the decision. An alternate video along the same lines as *Schindler's List* (rescuing Jewish people) was produced by HBO called *The Rescuers*.

## Standards & Other Suggestions

Materials and lesson plans for a Holocaust unit exist in abundance on the internet. A simple keyword search of “Holocaust” and “lesson plans” uncovers thousands of hits. Some sites with excellent lessons include the NCTE homepage ([www.ncte.org](http://www.ncte.org)) and the SCORE, Schools of California Online Resources for Educators, homepage ([www.sdcOE.k12.ca.us](http://www.sdcOE.k12.ca.us)). Please consult Chapter 8: History and History Makers in the Nilsen and Donelson text for more explanations, references, book lists, and movie suggestions concerning the topics presented in this unit and others for a historical genre study.

The activities presented in this section, as well as the use of cyber quests and virtual tours during instruction meet the following Sunshine State Standards for Grades 9-12:

**Language Arts Standards:**

LA.C.1.4.2, .3, .4 /LA.C.2.4.1, .2 /LA.C.3.4.2, .4 /LA.D.1.4.1, .3 /LA.D.2.4.1, .5

**Social Studies Standards:**

SS.A.1.4.1, .3 /SS.A.3.4.7 /SS.A.4.4.3, .6 /SS.A.5.4.5, .6

Extending activities submitted by Sara Jones